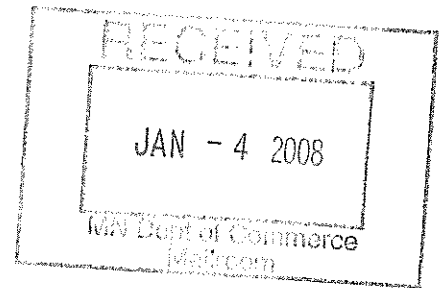


December 16, 2007

Bill Storm  
Minnesota Department of Commerce  
85 7th Place East  
Suite 500  
St. Paul, MN 55101



Dear Mr. Strom:

As a Bovey native and student of environmental science, I have serious concerns about the Mesaba Project and its impact on the environment. The EIS does not take into account the value of nature's ecosystems. For example, consider the value of recreation and water regulation and supply provided by Canisteo Mine. On a global scale, the value of recreation to the world is estimated to be worth at least \$3.0 trillion per year and water regulation is worth at least \$2.3 trillion per year. Here in MN, we have diverse ecosystems. How much ecological value does Minnesota provide to the global average and even more specifically, how do the natural resources located in Itasca County contribute to the larger picture? The EIS doesn't take this important measurement into account.

The EIS and supporters of this project view ecological services as free and limitless; expendable if it means more jobs and a boost to the economy. Environmentally literate citizens know this is false. Imagine if Excelsior Energy had to pay the residents of Itasca County for the full value of the recreation, water regulation, and plethora of other ecological services provided to the community by nature. The EIS does not address ecological value in a tangible way and therefore, is not comprehensive.

I am proud to be a Minnesotan and I have lived in places where the water is unsafe to swim in or drink. Minnesota must set an example by clearly defining and assigning a monetary value to the services that nature provides. This is the only way to assess the true cost and impact of a project like this. It's clear to me that the cost is too high and that this project will not provide a healthy and secure life for area residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

*Dana Saville*

Dana L. Saville  
Bovey Resident